

CANTERBURY ORCHID SOCIETY

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Next Meeting: Monday 1st February – 7pm.
Speaker: John Wool DVD showing
Subject: Oncidiums and Sarcochilus culture



Pterostylis banksii

A very Happy New Year to all members and a successful and enjoyable growing year. Overall, last year proved to be good for growing, given there was a difficult period with fluctuating temperatures from late autumn well into springtime. As many members do not have purpose built growing houses and have to adapt to growing orchids in selected areas around their homes, the range and number of quality flowering plants on display at our Show was most impressive.

December Meeting:

The last meeting for the year was held on the first Monday in the month. Average attendances of about twenty members were treated to one of the finest displays of flowering orchids of the year. The most outstanding plants were two fine specimens of *Coelogyne mooreana*, in full bloom, displayed by Adrienne Rushworth, one of which was awarded an HCC some years ago. The other most notable plant was exhibited by Murray Lister. It was an outstanding example of *Laelia purpurata* var. 'werkhauserii' from the collection of Graham Palmer, who passed away last year. Graham, who lived at Pleasant Point was a member of the South Canterbury Orchid Society and is sadly missed by his many friends in the orchid world.



Laelia purpurata var. 'werkhauserii'

As there was no speaker for the evening, there was a wide ranging discussion on plant problems. In particular the incidence of spotting, on white flowers. It was generally agreed that it is caused by botrytis, and this resulted in a suggested number of remedies and preventatives used by experienced growers.

Botrytis Flower Spot on orchids is caused by spores from a fungus called *Botrytis cinerea*. Organic matter like old leaves and wilted flowers should always be cleared from the growing area, as fungus will multiply on decaying organic matter in a poorly ventilated, warm environment. Fungi release **spores** into the air that can fall on healthy plants and infect them. Spores will germinate on infected flowers within six hours when the relative humidity is near 100%. They are spread via water, splashed onto sensitive flowers or damaged tissue.

A visit to the local hardware or garden centre will present you with a bewildering array of chemicals for the control of Botrytis, claiming to have either preventative or curative properties. Over thirty years ago, I encountered Botrytis while growing glasshouse tomatoes. The standard remedy at the time was to use the dangerous systemic fungicide, Benlate, in combination with equally toxic Lanate, for insect control. About ten years ago I investigated the properties of the ancient and widely used remedy, Neem. International research institutes have found it contains effective chemicals that work systemically as an antifeedant for all sucking and chewing insects, and also has potent antiviral and **fungicidal** properties. On *Sarcochilus* I encountered a big problem with 'flower spotting' and decided to try Neem Oil.

It is now standard practise for me to selectively spray Neem Oil on flower spikes as they develop, just before the florets open.

I have found this to be a safe effective chemical to control Botrytis and spotting on flowers.

This one-off spray is in **addition** to regular seasonal applications in January, May and September that will ward off all insects that feed directly on the sap of plants.

The effects of Neem are not instantaneous, unlike many other chemical remedies as it takes time to build up in the plant's sap and needs to be topped up regularly.

Perhaps this is why many growers are reluctant to make the commitment to give it a go.

During the meeting it was decided to start the New Year with a visit to three orchid houses, concluding with a BBQ meal on Sunday the 14th of February.

Details will be confirmed at the next meeting.

The evening concluded with a special supper provided by members, to celebrate another

successful year of growing orchids as a society.

N.Z. Native Orchid Group Field Trip.

Contributed by Melanie Bridgen.

The group came together at Arthurs Pass to explore the area. They stayed at the Outdoor Education Lodge in the township for seven nights from the 3rd January.

Gordon Sylvester from Kumara, a good friend of the Group, organised the week long event.

Murray and Gwenda Lister and Melanie from Canterbury were joined by other members from throughout N.Z.

One of the highlights of the survey was David McConnachie's discovery of *Pterostylis Irwinii*. This was only the second time this orchid has been located so far south. The previous finding was on the Takaka Hill about ten years ago. David had previously been on our Society's trip to the West Coast.

The party comprised twenty people of varying expertise and included an enthusiastic gentleman from England who came especially for the occasion.

The group covered 16 locations from Otira to Bealy Spur and most were visited two or three times.

Armed with 45 known records of species, the survey found 37, including 6 new species for the area. We were all highly satisfied to find so many in one week.

Murray had an eagle eye for spotting orchids, and energy that knocked the socks off some of the others. Gwenda kept all the tired types chipper, and Melanie's team won the prize for most kilometres in a day. (12 kms with 30+ river crossings).

Evenings were filled in with various activities, comprised presentations, identifications and talks.

In the presence of such experienced native orchid people we were learning full-time, both in the field and during the evenings. The northerners were clearly delighted with the number of orchids found, the weather and all the hospitality provided in abundance.

The Taranaki O.S. Summer Show.

Contributed by Tony

I was fortunate to be able to attend the annual gathering of orchid growers in Taranaki, during the week-end 14th -16th January.

We travelled by car from Christchurch to New Plymouth in two stages, staying the first night in Picton. We caught the 6.25am Ferry to Wellington and drove to New Plymouth, arriving early evening in good time to register.



Disas provided a stunning display at the Show

Registrants were welcomed by Murray Fawcett the President, and shortly after the Paphiopedilum Group attended by 35 growers, held their annual meeting.

Saturday morning kicked off at 8am, with the Disa Group meeting and judging of the plants by judges from around the country.

At 9.00am the annual Cym.Society of America, NZ Branch meeting was held and the outstanding display of more than 400 orchid plants in fifteen sections, was opened to the Public at 10am.

By 11am, the famous Car Boot Sale outside the hall was in full swing. Including myself, there were about 25 growers from all parts of the North Island, offering a wide variety of plants for sale, or swap.

At 3.30pm the Odontoglossum Group Meeting was held, and in the evening a sumptuous sit down dinner was enjoyed by over 100 registrants.

After dinner, the highlight of our visit was a guided walk around the Pukekura Park illuminations, hosted by George Fuller, a well respected orchid grower and retired Curator of the park.

Sunday morning, the Masdevallia Group held their yearly meeting, and the Show concluded at 1pm.

This event has been hosted by the Taranaki Society for nearly thirty years. It is a wonderful opportunity to put faces to many orchid growers from all parts of the country, in a relaxed and friendly way.